BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

AN EXPERIMENT IN RECONDITIONING MALADJUSTED CHILDREN OF PRESCHOOL AGE

A Thesis

submitted by

Alison Muriel Pitkin

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Approved by

First Reader Richard K. Conant

Second Reader Jennette R. Gruener

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PART ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE THESIS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Problem Under Investigation

This thesis proposes, first, to give a complete account of the unique experiment in reconditioning maladjusted children of preschool age that is being conducted at the Play School for Habit Training, North Bennet Street Industrial School, Boston, Massachusetts. It proposes secondly to supplement the account with sufficient personally observed illustrations and original interpretations of the methods being used to produce a study conveying the dynamisms wherein lie the Play School's essential power.[1] Thirdly, the thesis proposes to define the place of the Play School in the general child welfare movement.

B. Purpose in Writing the Thesis

Since 1922 there has been developing in Boston a unique venture in reconditioning maladjusted children of preschool age. It is an ambitious program based on sound principles of child psychology, and in the nineteen years since its beginning has come to assume such import for child training and

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[1] Throughout this thesis the term "Play School" refers specifically to the Play School for Habit Training, North Bennet Street Industrial School, Boston, Massachusetts.

development that it should be made generally known to people interested in this field. Specialists from as far away as New Zealand and Holland have been to visit this project and talk with its Director and Founder, yet because of a lack of descriptive and interpretative material, it is too little understood even in Boston. The project referred to is the Play School for Habit Training, being conducted by Grace M. Caldwell at the North Bennet Street Industrial School, a Boston settlement house in "Little Italy", situated at 39 North Bennet Street. The Play School offers a seven hour day kindergarten and nursery school program to children of normal or above normal intelligence whose behavior deviates so undesirably from so-called normal behavior that their parents or guardians ask help in retraining them. The Play School differs from the ordinary nursery school not only in admitting just problem children, but in judiciously borrowing from the fields of child training and development, psychology, case work, group work, and progressive education theories and methods effective in bringing about favorable emotional and mental adjustments. The Play School is a new constellation of techniques, and a testing ground for scientific theories regarding children. One purpose in writing this paper is to make a general contribution to child welfare and progressive education literature by interpreting this new approach and revealing how these theories are working in practice. This

will involve the creation of a vitalized account of the varied techniques used by the Play School in reconditioning maladjusted children of preschool age, so that the reader will have a clear picture of what is done and how the children react. The account will be supplemented with sufficient personally observed illustrations and original interpretations of the methods being used to produce a study that reveals the dynamisms behind the Play School's achievements. The principles, methods, and equipment used will not be discussed in academic procession but treated as integral parts of the unique organization which constitutes the Play School for Habit Training.

Another purpose in writing this paper is to define the place of the Play School in the child welfare movement, i.e., to show its importance for, and relation to, education, habit clinics, case work, group work, and mental hygiene. Working at the Play School are two nursery teachers, a director who is both a trained case worker and a kindergarten teacher, a psychologist, several posture students, and a student social worker who also does group work. The School maintains a close association with the habit and guidance clinics in Boston. This reveals the various child welfare fields from which the Play School draws. An attempt will be made to interpret how the School integrates work of its staff and the services of the clinics, bringing out its place in the child welfare

movement.

It is planned to present the study of the Play School for Habit Training in such a manner that there is included a description of this unique experiment which might be helpful in setting up a similar agency. Acquaintance with the work of the Play School has convinced the writer that it has given real help to many children, and there are, without doubt, countless children in other communities who would benefit by attendance at such a school.

A further motivation for writing this paper is to fill the need of the Play School itself for written material to be used for publicity, and for answering the frequent requests of individuals, colleges, and social agencies for an account of its work.

C. Sources of Data

As a student social worker from Boston University School of Social Work, the writer spends four days a week during the current college year working at the Play School for Habit Training and has been in a position to observe the Play School in operation, both within the School itself and in cooperating agencies and the homes of its clients. Supplementary sources of information and bases of appraisal are agency case records, annual reports, newspaper and magazine articles, etc.; interviews with the Director and other staff members; and reading in the general field of preschool ed-

ucation and training, child psychology, treatment of problem children, and current experiments in therapy with young children.

D. Methods of Study

One method of study consisted of interviews with the Director and other staff members to learn the history of the agency, past and present methods and the reaction of the children to them, and other pertinent material. Agency records, annual reports, newspaper and magazine articles have been read.

For eight months, four days a week, the writer has participated in the work of the agency as student social worker. In this phase of the study there have been two channels of information, arising from the two areas in which the writer functioned. As an assistant teacher in the school rooms there have been rich opportunities to observe the application of the various methods which the school employs, and the reactions of the children to them, as well as to become more acquainted with child nature. Regular social work functions have involved home visiting, strict observation of individual children in the schoolrooms, follow-up work in cooperation with hospitals, clinics, and other social agencies; the making of referrals to, and working in conjunction with, habit clinics; and investigation and study of applications. Lastly, as a part of the Play School's follow-up program, the writer has

been group leader of a club of ten six year old girls, all Play School "graduates".

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE PLAY SCHOOL FOR HABIT TRAINING

The twentieth century has been characterized by an increasing interest in understanding the formation and reformation of human personality as the movement to develop happy, capable, constructive citizens progresses. The discovery that most adult maladjustments have their genesis in childhood has focused interest on the developing and emerging personalities of children. Educators, psychologists, doctors, social workers, and parents are working first of all to so guide the child's experiences that his emotional development proceeds naturally and integratedly, and secondly to correct any maladjustments as soon as they are recognized. Among the ranks of individuals and institutions working to help maladjusted children, such as habit clinics, visiting teachers, guidance counselors, reform schools, special classes, etc., is the Play School for Habit Training, a school exclusively for problem children of preschool age.

A. Establishment of the Play School as a Means of Helping Problem Children

The founder and present director of the Play School for Habit Training, Grace M. Caldwell, established the School as the result of a deep concern because the problem children enrolled in the Boston day nurseries (with which she was affil-

iated as case worker) who had attained the hoary age of six to twelve years were not being helped to a happier life adjustment. She looked for some way in which children moving toward adult life with the handicaps of instability, emotional immaturity, anti-social behavior patterns, etc., could be set on the track to personally satisfying and socially useful living, preventing such social fates as criminality, instability, insanity, chronic discontent, alcoholism, and living far below one's capacities. Miss Caldwell decided to work with children of preschool age, not because her interest in them was greater than in any other age, but because she felt that the younger the child, the more easily his behavior could be modified and improved. After studying the problem, she decided the situation that would offer the best opportunities to treat a problem child was a progressive nursery school set-up for children two to four years of age, and a kindergarten for the five year olds.

B. The Setting of the Play School for Habit Training in the Preschool Movement

In order to understand how a preschool came to be conceived as a valuable tool for helping problem children, a brief history of the preschool movement will be given. The earliest preschools were infant schools started in France in the early nineteenth century as a means of relieving the physical misery and moral degradation of the children of the

poor or to give daytime care to children of working mothers. Infant schools begun in England and Scotland had similar philanthropic purposes, but, owing to the teachings of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, they were also interested in developing character through habit training.

The first kindergarten was established by Froebel in 1837. It had definite educational goals and methods. Froebel differed from the founders of the infant schools in that he conceived of preschool education as a supplement to home life, and not as a substitute. The modern progressive kindergarten has substituted much freedom of activity for the formal Froebelian practices, but many of his educational ideals are still upheld. Like the infant schools, the first nursery schools were philanthropic in purpose, but, in contrast to the infant schools, their educational objectives were well defined.

In the United States the development of preschool education has been influenced primarily by the desire for educational experiment and research rather than for the relief of working mothers or neglected children. Educational methods have reflected the growing interest in, and understanding of, personality formation and John Dewey's theory that "we learn to do by doing". Characteristic developments include attention to the physical care of children and establishment of good health habits, a growing interest in child psychology, an increasing cooperation between home and school, the applica-

tion of mental hygiene principles, and the encouragement of wise home management through parental education.

Adaptations or expansions of the nursery school or kindergarten idea grew as a result of special interests. Preschools were opened for purposes of teacher training, such as the Ruggle Street Nursery in Boston; for research in child development, such as the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station at the University of Iowa; as laboratories for education of parents or young women, such as the nursery school at the Merrill-Palmer School of Homemaking in Detroit. Another use of the preschool set-up is found in the Guidance Nursery connected with the Yale University Psycho-Clinic, established as a means of observing and guiding young children and their parents. And in 1922 the Play School for Habit Training was opened in Boston as an experiment in reconditioning problem children.[1]

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[1] An excellent review of the history of the preschool movement that outlines the development of its philosophy, describes the earliest kindergarten and nursery schools, and relates the growing interest in child study, cooperation between home and school, and the physical health and mental hygiene movements to modern preschool education, is found in the following source, from which the material for this summary was gathered: "History of the Movement in Preschool and Parental Education," The Twenty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Preschool and Parental Education, (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1929), pp.7-43.

C. Objectives of the Play School for Habit Training

The basic aim of the Play School for Habit Training is to change emotionally unstable children into happy, adjusted personalities with habits and attitudes which will enable them to meet life zestfully and give to it the best of which they are capable. The Play School has corollary objectives which have been ably summed up by the Director as follows:

1. To study the underlying causes of anti-social behavior and maladjustment in such young children.

2. To experiment with methods for reconditioning wrong a ttitudes and establishing healthy emotional reactions.

3. To demonstrate what changes, if any, could be made in undesirable attitudes in a specially planned environment — to prove, if such changes were successful, to what extent they could be made to carry into the home environment where the trouble started.[2]

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[2] Ibid., Grace M. Caldwell, "The Play School for Habit Training," p.2 0 4.

PART TWO

THE PLAY SCHOOL FOR HABIT TRAINING IN ACTION

CHAPTER I

ADMISSION AND RECEPTION PROCEDURE

Housed in six rooms and a play roof in the North Bennet Street Industrial School any week-day morning may be found about thirty lively, unpredictable, fascinating children from two to five years of age. Each of them presents, or has presented, a behavior problem of such complexity or tenacity that the parents have asked help in overcoming it. The problems vary with each child and include such emotional disorders, or symptoms of emotional disorders, as jealousy, temper tantrums, fear, excessive shyness, daydreaming, destructiveness, cruelty, irritability, refusal to eat or to talk, mother fixation, negativism, thumb-sucking, masturbation, enuresis, stuttering, and fire-setting.

Either alone or with the backing of a friend or a social agency the parents have applied for admission of their child. The father or (more often) the mother, or both, have had at least one interview with the Director in which they described the difficulty they have had with their child and told enough of his developmental history and home background to enable her to estimate whether the Play School might be of help in the situation. A sample of the application blank which is used is found on page fourteen. Frequently the Director decides the problem is one which can be conquered within the home if the

APPLICATION

Date

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Address

Reason for application

Referred by

Father's Name

Age

Born in

Schooling

Occupation

Mother's Name

Age

Born in

Schooling

Date of marriage

Children Ages

Child

Birth Normal
Vaccinated
Schick
T. A. T.
Illnesses

Eating Habits

Sleeping Habits

Special Facts

parents will make a few changes in their methods, and she carefully talks through with them what might be done, and sends them away with her blessing. Sometimes, too, she decides that the parents have exaggerated or trumped up a problem for the sake of securing for their child the advantages of nursery school experience, or that they have not understood the Play School is concerned only with emotionally unstable children or children with habits harmful to their own and others' welfare; and in these cases she refers the parents to one of the several nursery schools in the district. Another reason for refusing admission is the decision that the parents would prove so uncooperative as to negate the work of the school. The most common reason for refusal is a full enrollment.

Ideally a home visit is made before deciding to admit a child, in order to get a fuller picture of the environment with which he has to contend, but the Play School, having a restricted income like many other worthy institutions, has a limited paid personnel and there sometimes is no properly equipped person free to make the visit. However, since the Director knows so well the district in which she works, she receives rather clear mental pictures from the statements made by the parents. During the past year a student social worker at the Play School has made home visits in response to applications and has thus been able to supplement the infor-

mation obtained at the office interview by the Director.

In these first contacts with the family it is important to establish the foundations of a working relationship so that the maximum cooperation can be obtained, It is necessary for the Play School representative to be alert to discover any immediate needs of the child, any signs indicating wrong parental attitudes or methods, or any emotional or financial discords in the home which may be having a harmful effect on the child. These would all represent issues to work through with the parents later.

Once it is decided to admit a child, his personal contact with the staff and pupils begins. A good beginning is very desirable as initial impressions are not easily overcome, and as long as a child is unhappy and resistant the task of re-conditioning him cannot progress. For these emotionally unstable children as smooth an introduction as possible should be arranged, for they react more violently to new and exciting situations than the normal child, who has more self control and greater inner security.

Recently the writer, as student social worker, has been trying some interesting experiments in preparing the child for Play School and the Play School for him, so that he can make the adjustment to school life as smoothly as possible. In order to show the common admission procedure of the Play School in process, and to assure a realistic conception of the experiment in preparing children to come to School once

the decision to admit them is reached, the case of Jimmy is presented.

JIMMY

At the time this is being written, Jimmy is on his third week at the Play School, a happy and active member of the kindergarten group. The story of how he came to be there is an experiment in admission and reception procedure in which Jimmy, his mother, public health nurse, teacher, social worker, and Director participated, and shows especially the integrating role of the social worker in the process.

On July 11, 1939, at the suggestion of her public health nurse, Jimmy's mother came into the office to ask that Jimmy be admitted to Play School. At that time he was three years old, the youngest of four children born in five years, and quite a handful for his mother to care for. The Play School Director interviewed the mother, getting the information required on the Application Blank (see page fourteen), discussing the situation with her, and making suggestions as to how to manage the boy at home. As the School enrollment was complete at that time, this was explained to the mother and nothing further was done.

In the fall of 1940 Jimmy's mother reapplied for his admission. The family had been increased by two more babies, one then fourteen months and the other a month old. However, it was not until January, 1941, that the Play School was ready to admit more children. At that time the student social worker visited the homes of parents applying since September, 1940, to determine which children showed the greatest need for the kind of help which the Play School gives, and which parents would appear to be the most cooperative so that the Play School could get the greatest return on its investment. With a long waiting list it is unwise to admit children whose parents undo at home all that is done at Play School, and the space would better be given to some child whose parents will work with the School so that there is hope for real progress.

The first visit to Jimmy's home was made January 22, 1941. The account which is given is taken almost verbatim from the agency record of home contacts, and illustrates the actual process.

The social worker found the family of eight living on an alley up three flights in three small dark rooms, only two of which were open most of the day as the father works at night

and sleeps during the day. Jimmy had only the kitchen to play in, and there was no free floor space there. The mother, a slight young woman, was tending the five months old baby, who had recently come home from the hospital after a bad case of pneumonia. The mother was very anxious to have Jim come to Play School. In answer to the social worker's inquiry about any special trouble she might have with him, she said Jimmy was restive and mischievous because of being cooped up in the house all day, yet to let him play unsupervised in the streets was dangerous and made him "fresh". With the two babies to tend and the housework to do the mother could not very well take time to supervise Jimmy outdoors. The mother talked about her problems intelligently, and despite the overburden of having six small children in three rooms, did not complain nor lose her poise, but discussed the situation rationally. Jimmy's shoes were worn through on the sole and sides, and his mother explained he has to have corrective plates in his shoes. She had just taken him to be fitted for a new pair which he would get the following week. The mother expressed her wish to leave the North End and said she must at least move to a larger apartment. She had tried last summer but could find no decent five room apartment to fit her budget. The social worker commented on how much better it would be for the children to live in a bigger place, and spoke sympathetically of the difficulty of finding the right place.

Following this visit the social worker discussed the family with the Director. It seemed that while Jim had no single outstanding behavior problem, he presented potentialities for misconduct and a warped development which might be prevented if given the opportunity for safe but lively play with other children and for the training and understanding which a patient teacher can give. Therefore, it was decided that the social worker should make a second visit to the home to become better acquainted with the family and to inquire the name of the hospital attending to Jimmy's feet. If, as seemed likely, in the final consideration of Jimmy's case, we decided to admit him, we would send to the hospital for a report of his foot condition and a list of any recommended exercises, since the Play School has students from the Bouvre-Boston School of Physical Education once a week to give corrective posture and foot exercises to the children who need it.

On this second visit the social worker learned the Massachusetts General Hospital was supervising Jimmy's foot condition. The mother asked several questions about the Play School and the social worker described the general routine in clear and simple sentences so that the listening Jimmy would be familiar with it. Then the social worker talked in friendly fashion directly to Jimmy, describing to him the kindergarten

children's "grocery store" and telling what the dinner menu had been on that day. The mother said Jim had talked of nothing but school since the worker's previous visit.

By this time the social worker had completed visiting the homes of the other applicants, and the School was ready to make its final decision on Jim. After talking with the social worker, the Director decided to admit him.

On January 24, 1941, the social worker called at the house to say the Play School would be glad to have Jimmy start the following Tuesday (a day on which the social worker would be present to greet him), and to prepare Jimmy for his new experience in order to facilitate his adjustment. Jimmy smiled happily when he heard he could go to school, and said, "I wish I could start tomorrow." He asked where he could keep his hat and coat and the worker described the locker that would have his name on it, and the bed on which would be printed "Jimmy". She told him the names of his "jolly red-haired teacher" and two or three of the children. She said the children had been told he was coming and were looking forward to it. At his request she also told the dinner menu for this day. His mother seemed as glad as Jimmy that he was going to school, and inquired about costs. The social worker explained the usual charge was ten cents a day to help pay for meals, but that the Play School sometimes varied the charge to fit the parents' budget. The mother said she thought she could manage fifty cents a week.

In the meantime the social worker and teacher had begun preparing the kindergarten children to receive Jimmy. At dinner on the morning of the decision to admit him the social worker, who eats with the children, had told the children at her table a new child was coming. The children showed a quick interest; they wanted to know his name, his age, where he lived, etc. These questions were all answered. The social worker then remarked Jim would probably feel pretty strange at first; he wouldn't know where the paper hankies or the wash basin were kept, for instance, nor just how to go about getting the blocks out, and he wouldn't know any of the children. Again the response was instantaneous. Gerald said, "I'll show him where we keep the hankies," and Benny said, "I'll ask him to play blocks with me." One child summed it all up by saying, "We can all show him how we do things." Much the same ground was covered on the second day, the children showing a special interest in which locker and which bed would be Jimmy's. The teacher had gone through a similar process at her table and her success in creating in the children a warmth and understanding for Jimmy, and a sense of responsibility in making him feel at home, is high lighted in this re-

mark from Kenneth, who names all his dolls "Jim" after his adored father, "He'll be my Jimmy."

On Tuesday morning Jimmy and his mother appeared bright and early, both smiling. The social worker was there to greet them. She introduced Jimmy and mother to the teacher and stood by while the teacher showed him his locker and started him taking off his outdoor clothes. When Jimmy was ready to go in the kindergarten room to play, his mother said good-bye to him, and the social worker assured him his mother would be back for him when he got up from his afternoon nap, and then accompanied the mother to the landing. The mother explained that Jim's new shoes had cut such a slice from the family income that week that she could not pay the fifty cents for meals but felt she could thereafter, and the social worker assured her it would be all right for this week. A friendly conversation ensued in which the mother told about her younger sister's having appeared at the house at seven o'clock that morning in beginning labor with her first child, and the consequent suppressed excitement until she left for the hospital. The social worker asked if Jimmy had understood what was going on. The mother said, "Oh! No, I told him she had appendicitis. I've been lucky in that my two babies that were born at home came at night so that in the morning I could just tell the children the doctor brought them." The social worker said, "You could begin to tell them where babies really come from pretty soon, you know. Lots of mothers have learned it's better to tell their children simply when they are young, rather than letting them pick it up just anywhere." The mother gave an embarrassed nod and the social worker, knowing how revolutionary that idea is in the North End, did not press the subject, but was content with having planted the idea.

After the mother left, the social worker went back to smile at Jimmy and admire his block tower. Though persistent duties kept her busy elsewhere and she could not make the careful observation of his first day reactions that she wished, she managed to peek in his room several times during the morning and give him a friendly hello. The children made friendly overtures to him and he responded with shy smiles and an eagerness and enthusiasm to do what they suggested. Though, as was natural on a first day, his interest changed rather quickly from one activity to another as he became acquainted with the resources of the playroom, he was happy and agreeable. Lunch and nap caused no difficulties (almost every new child protests the nap, for which he has to take off his shoes and give himself up completely to his new environment). The rest of the week went equally well, and his popularity with the children was noticeable. Whether Jimmy's happy adjustment was due to a natural poise of his own, or to the careful prep-

aration given him, his mother, and the kindergarten children, cannot be said, but the chances are both factors contributed to enable him to slip so quickly and easily into the kindergarten group.

In conclusion, several of the factors contributing to make the home and school contact in this case the most profitable for both parties may be listed for emphasis:

1. The Director carefully considered the mother's story at the time of the first application interview, and made suggestions for managing the boy at home, even though he could not be admitted to the School at that time.

2. The social worker, in her visits to the home, got a well rounded picture of the home, including family composition, personality of the mother and Jimmy, physical condition of the home, mother's attitude toward the children, especially Jimmy, etc. This helped in determining Jimmy's need to come to Play School, and later to understand him.

3. The social worker was alert to discover immediate needs, such as new shoes for Jimmy.

4. The social worker established a good relationship with the mother by showing interest and sympathy, followed by action.

5. The social worker ascertained the mother understood just what the Play School might offer Jimmy.

6. She established a friendly relationship with Jimmy and prepared him for his new experience by telling him about the School in language and detail suited to him.

7. The children at Play School were led to anticipate Jimmy's coming with pleasure, and to assume a responsibility for making him feel at home.

8. The social worker, already a friend of Jimmy's, was careful to be in evidence during his first day to lessen his feeling of strangeness.

9. When Jimmy's mother was about to leave him at the

School on his first day he was carefully told she would call for him after his nap, to increase his sense of security.

10. Jimmy was given his own time to become acquainted with the school surroundings. He was always considered a thinking participant in the admission and reception process, and was given the responsibility for his own behavior.

11. The financial remuneration expected from the family was discussed with the mother and adjusted to the family's ability to pay.

12. The social worker took advantage of opportunities for parent education, as when she spoke with the mother about telling children where babies come from.

13. Starting with the social worker's first home visit, the admission and reception process was slow enough to allow for the assimilation of enough information to decide intelligently whether or not to admit Jimmy, and to give Jimmy and his parents time to make the necessary mental adjustments, yet rapid enough so that the parents felt the School was really interested in them and taking action on their case.

It would have been an improvement in the handling of this case if the father, as well as the mother, had been seen before admitting Jimmy, not only to enlarge the picture of Jimmy's background, but also to make the father feel a part of the united effort to help Jimmy. Perhaps if Jimmy had paid a brief visit to the School before becoming regularly enrolled it would have made his adjustment still easier.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURE THROUGH WHICH THE PLAY SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

In the process of retraining or stabilizing a child, the child is the major participant, and to understand how the Play School grows to be constructive factor in his life we must be acquainted with the school life into which he enters his first day, and continues to share until he is of the age to go on to public or parochial school. In general, the Play School tries to give the best in the way of a balanced program of activity and rest, interesting play materials, nourishing food, opportunities for creative expression, and understanding leadership.

A. The Daily Program

The daily program to which the child must adjust and through which the School functions is given on page twenty-four. It will be noticed the children are divided into three groups, according to their maturity: the Baby Group, the Middle Group, and the Kindergarten. Ordinarily chronological age determines the placing. However, if it develops that a three and a half year old child has the habits, attitudes, and abilities of a two year old, he may be placed with the two year olds until he can be helped to increased maturity and achievement. Or if a three year old is mentally and physically at the four year level, he may be placed in the

DAILY PROGRAM
PLAY SCHOOL FOR HABIT TRAINING

Baby Group

8:30 to 9:30	Drink of water on arrival. Play in upstairs playrooms in inclement weather. Play on roof if weather permits.
9:30 - 9:40	Toilet - wash-up.
9:40 - 9:55	Music - rhythm - singing - tone work.
9:55 - 10:05	Cod Liver Oil - Orange Juice.
10:05 - 10:20	Rest.
10:20 - 10:40	Manipulative material - doll play - clay - blocks.
10:40 - 11:30	Self directed play on roof or indoor play rooms - depending on the weather.
11:30 - 11:45	Toilet - wash-up for lunch.
11:45 - 12:20	Lunch.
12:20 - 12:30	Toilet - remove shoes for nap.
12:30 - 2:30	Nap.
2:30 - 2:40	Put on shoes. Cod liver oil - milk
2:40 - 3:30	Free play - stories - games.

Middle Group

8:30 - 9:30	Drink of water on arrival. Play in upstairs playroom or on roof.
9:30 - 9:40	Toilet - wash-up.
9:40 - 10:00	Music - rhythm - singing - tone work.
10:00 - 10:10	Cod liver oil - orange juice.
10:10 - 10:25	Rest.
10:25 - 11:00	Directed work or free play with clay - finger painting - doll play - carpentry - block - building.
11:00 - 11:20	Self directed play on roof or indoor play rooms - depending on the weather.
11:30 - 11:45	Toilet - wash-up.
11:45 - 12:20	Lunch.
12:20 - 12:30	Toilet - remove shoes for nap.
12:30 - 2:30	Nap.
2:30 - 2:40	Put on shoes - Toilet - Cod liver oil - Milk.
2:40 - 3:30	Free play on roof or in upstairs rooms - depending on weather.

Kindergarten Group

8:30 - 9:40	Drink of water on arrival. Guided work. 1 hr.	
9:40 - 9:50	Toilet - wash-up - orange juice - Cod liver oil	10 m.
9:50 - 10:40	Play on roof - concrete room or gym.	50 m.
10:45 - 11:15	Music - story telling.	30 m.
11:15 - 11:30	Wash-up - set tables.	10 m.
11:30 - 11:45	Rest - books.	15 m.
11:45 - 12:20	Lunch.	35 m.
12:20 - 12:30	Toilet - remove shoes for nap.	10 m.
12:30 - 2:30	Nap.	2 hrs.
2:30 - 2:40	Put on shoes - toilet - Cod liver oil - milk	10 m.
2:40 - 3:30	Play on roof - matching games.	1 hr. 10 m.

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kindergarten where he will receive the stimulation of older children and more difficult activities. There is a slightly different schedule for each of the three maturity groups as each schedule is worked out to fit the needs of the particular age group, and the three schedules are skillfully integrated to assure the best use of the Play School facilities. For example, except for a short time in the afternoon, not more than two groups are at play on the rather limited roof space at the same time.

B. Rooms and Equipment

The Play School occupies six rooms and a play roof. The kindergarten children spend most of their indoor time in their large "schoolroom"; the Middle Group divides its indoor time between a small room for eating and quiet activities and a playroom with a carpentry corner used by all the School; the Baby Group has its large all-purpose room. There is a large room with a concrete floor which contains a large house for climbing and a sand box. This room opens onto the roof and in it the children play with their carts, see-saws, large hollow blocks, and other large toys when the weather is inclement. For good weather there is a play roof. Being located in Boston's densely populated North End, there is no ground space available for a playground. The sixth room is the Director's office.

The Play School equipment is for the most part similar

to that of any up-to-date nursery school. The tables, chairs, toilets, and wash benches are scaled to the children's height. There is a stimulating array of play materials: blocks, dolls and play house equipment, pull toys, puzzles, picture books, musical instruments, art materials, etc. On the roof is a large double packing box, a cannon climber, a horizontal ladder, a slide and five window boxes.

C. Staff

The staff to which the child must adjust and in whose hands lies his conversion into a happy and responsible future citizen consists of five full-time paid workers, and numerous helpers. The Director is a woman who has had both case work and teaching training and experience, and who is an invincible modern pioneer in the field of child training (and re-training). She is the motivating spirit of the Play School, and the one who determines its policies. She makes the contacts with the parents and cooperating agencies. She admits, and in rare instances, discharges. She is thoroughly acquainted with all the children because she spends time observing them in their groups, and they often visit her in the office to have cuts disinfected or bring a message from home or listen to the music box or like important business. She guides the informal case conferences with the teachers and student social worker, correlates the information and ideas proferred with her own observations, and supplies suggestions

for new treatment methods. From the children's point of view she is an understanding, calming woman with an endless supply of fascinating toys and ideas; above all, in young William's words, she is "the boss of this School."

The teacher of the Baby Group is a particularly calm and patient young woman, a graduate of the Perry Kindergarten Normal School in Boston. She has under her direction a young woman without special training but with a genuine love of children who assists in the routine work.

The kindergarten teacher has a master's degree from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, has had courses in educational methods at Boston University, and has conducted a kindergarten of her own. Both teachers have educated themselves in methods of helping problem children, have questioning minds and keen powers of observation. They are prepared to meet with equanimity the most violent tantrums or the stubbornest of food problems.

Though recognizing the desirability of having a trained teacher for the Middle Group, present budgetary limitations do not permit this.[1] Therefore, the Director takes direct responsibility for this group, depending on the gentle and intelligent woman who has been associated with her for some

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[1] The Play School, as a project of the North Bennet Street Industrial School, is supported by the Boston Community Fund. A discussion of finances and administration will not be undertaken in this thesis as they do not bear particularly on the ideology of the School and are matters of individual adjustment.

time and the one or two student teachers from Boston's kindergarten and nursery training schools to see the children through their daily schedule and carry out her instructions when she is otherwise occupied. There are one or two student teachers in each of the other groups too, for this unique and forward thinking school is a popular place for teacher training. Besides these regular teachers and student teachers, there is this year a student social worker who spends approximately one-third her agency time with the children observing special individuals or assuming a teacher or group leader role in order to improve her acquaintance with the children.

D. Schoolmates

The new child not only has to adjust to the physical surroundings and adult personnel, he must also adjust to his schoolmates. They are as potent an element in his rehabilitation as the teachers, for it is in large part by the interaction of the group members on each other, and by group training, that the child is relieved of his problems. When one stubborn personality comes face to face with another stubborn personality, he comes to learn selfish dominance doesn't work. Or when a finicky eater sees the other children scrape their plates clean and look at him with lifted eyebrows, or more commonly, with pointed remarks, he is moved to produce a clean plate too.

The enrollment in the Play School on May 1, 1941 totaled

twenty-eight children; nine in the Baby Group, seven in the Middle Group, and twelve in the kindergarten. Care is taken to admit children gradually so that each child is well integrated within the group before a new one enters. The numbers are limited to protect against over-stimulation and so that each child can receive individual study and attention.

Ninety-five per cent of the children are of Italian parentage (mostly of the second generation in this country) which connotes a special problem of adjustment for the child, and special consideration on the part of the Play School. The difficulty which the children have in learning to like American food is one problem which the School meets. Small servings of a dish new to them, and occasional servings of spaghetti or salad fixdd with olive oil are two methods used to help the child.

Some of the children hear only Italian spoken at home, which means the Play School has to help the child acquire an English vocabulary as soon as possible, and protect him from too perplexing speech situations. There are differences between Italian and American culture in methods of discipline, and in the concept of the child's place in society, which also demand understanding on the part of the Play School.

CHAPTER III

MEANS USED TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD

The picture of the Play School structure to which the entering child must adjust and through which the Play School functions is complete. Next comes a consideration of what the Play School does to help the child's specific problems, for once the child becomes a regular Play School attendant, the challenging job of understanding him and finding the answers to his needs begins.

For the first few weeks of adjustment, while child and personnel are learning to know each other, usually no special tactics are applied toward attacking his problem. The process of orientation in which the child must become acquainted with the staff, the other children, and the school routine is considered so difficult that he is allowed considerable leeway in conduct. At this early date no demand is made for a special effort on his part to overcome the habit pattern for which he was admitted. Moreover, it takes time for the staff to acquire an understanding of him and to determine ways to help him.

A. Skilled Observation of the Child at School

The major way in which the Play School learns to understand the child is by constant observation seven hours a day, five days a week. The teachers, Director, and student social

worker watch closely his reaction to the school routine, to the other children, to the special situations which they may set up for him, and to themselves. The variety of situations and personalities the child contacts helps bring out his attitudes very quickly.

This process of observation begins with a bang on the child's first day, because his reactions to new situations are considered especially significant of the behavior patterns he has formed. When he cries constantly for his mother, or must establish his physical dominance over every other child in the group, or refuses to talk, those reactions, while probably not typical of his everyday behavior, are important sign posts in understanding his emotional adjustments or solutions for new problems.

A daily record is kept by the teacher in which the child's activities and emotional reactions are briefly summarized, and any incidents seeming to throw light on the child's adjustment or thinking are recorded. These recordings vary in length from day to day, depending on the amount of interesting material observed. Often, through pressure of work, they will be omitted in the case of a child who is making satisfactory progress and displays no noteworthy behavior.[1]

These daily records are in many instances supplemented by more detailed observations kept by the student teachers.

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[1] An example of a daily record entry is found on page forty-four in the case of Kenneth.

Each student teacher from a kindergarten or nursery training school, as a part of her professional development, is required to select one child whom she observes closely and of whose activities and behavior she keeps a careful record. This record is arranged in the manner indicated by the printed directions given the students (Appendix page eighty-two) on the blanks used for the purpose (Appendix pages 84,85,86,87,&88). These observations are,of course, of value to the Play School in rounding out the picture of the child.

When a child is proving to be particularly baffling, or for some reason the staff feels the need of more information regarding his daily activities, the student social worker spends several days observing and recording his every activity and speech. These records are studies for characteristic behavior reactions, for types of incidents which prove upsetting to the child or which stimulate him in some significant way, for remarks which may indicate inner worries and anxieties or sore spots in school or at home, etc. All of these observation records are kept in the child's folder and referred to by teachers, social worker, Director, and cooperating agencies.

B. Study of the Child's Home Situation

Another very important way through which the Play School learns to understand the child is a careful study of the elements in his home situation. Through office interviews with the parents, and through home visits made by the Director

or student social worker and occassionally by the teacher, the picture of the child's physical and emotional environment is rounded out. The importance of knowing about the child's home life in order to understand and help him is explained to the parents and they are encouraged to assist in the process by talking freely and frankly of home conditions, their feelings about this child and the other children, their own emotional problems, etc. Interviews of this sort not only throw light on the child's personality and needs, but at the same time involve educational and therapeutic work with the parents. These methods of helping the child by educating the parents in child training and by helping them reduce their own emotional conflicts will be discussed later.

C. Physical Check-Up and Mental Testing

The Play School includes other methods in its individual study of the child. The child is weighed and measured monthly at the School, for the important bearing the child's physical condition has on his personality growth and development is recognized. Formerly a pediatrician was employed to give biennial physical examinations. It is now the policy of the School not to do this. Instead, children who are suspected of having a health problem are referred to the medical agency which knows them. Practically every child is already affiliated with either a medical agency or a private doctor. The School obtains the medical history from these sources and

cooperates by following their instructions. For example, when Mary entered the School with a bad case of eczema, a report was obtained from her doctor and his instructions were carefully followed regarding the elimination of certain foods from her diet. These outside affiliations are preferred to the Play School's assumption of responsibility for medical examinations because they will last beyond the child's direct contact with the School. In making referrals, the School follows the family's lead.

Mental testing is done annually by the psychologist, who is also on the staff of Dr. Thom's Habit Clinic and the State Habit Clinics. The Revised Stanford-Binet Scale is given to every child. This year the Merrill-Palmer Scale was also included, and some children were given the Goodenough Drawing Test, and, one child, the Lincoln Hollow Square. Some years a reading readiness test has been given the children whose age qualified them to go on to public school the following year.

These mental tests are interpreted in the light of the child's performance in School, his home background, special handicapping features, etc. The Italian speaking background of many of these children is taken into account. Considered in their setting, these tests help estimate what level of performance may be expected of the child, and in what areas he needs special attention.

D. Intra-Agency Conferences

All this information bearing upon the child and collected in his folder becomes the source material for intra-agency conferences in which Director, teachers, and student social worker discuss the child and his needs. This exchange of ideas occurs whenever the need is felt by a staff member for advice regarding the performance of his particular function, whether it be for help in regard to guiding the child in School, for suggestions to make to the parents as to successful ways of handling the child, or for a thinking through of the implications of a child's conduct or of a home situation, etc. The interpretation of the child's conduct and of the meaning to him of his home and school experiences is on a common sense level involving accepted principles of mental hygiene, educational theory, and child training and development. The long experience of the Director has given her a special facility for understanding these children. Problems which seem to require psychiatric interpretation and treatment are referred to psychiatric clinics.

These intra-agency conferences -- very often they are spontaneous conversations in the halls or schoolrooms -- are vitally important in the work of the Play School. They assure that each staff member has the picture of the whole child. The student social worker contributes what she has learned about the home, the teacher tells about the child in school,

etc. Each staff member carries to the conference a new way of looking at the problem at hand. The teacher may explain the educational significance of a given factor, the student social worker may see it as having a bearing on the child's emotional life and reactions at home, the Director may correlate the picture as a whole or bring out a still different point of view. Thus, the teacher may remark that David is working very hard to learn to write his name, and doing very well. The student social worker might ask if this was not because David must always be first in every situation, and mention his mother's complaint that at home he has to be king pin or he has a tantrum. The Director might then point out the worth in David's concentration on writing, but suggest ways in which the teacher might get him to work for its own sake, at the same time planning herself to talk through with the mother why David must be first. Having discovered whether it is because he feels displaced by his baby sister and must prove his superiority, or because his parents have set that standard for him, or what, she can work with the parents to bring about a changed attitude.

The conferences result in suggestions for new approaches in handling the child which the teacher can apply in the schoolroom, they give the social worker talking points with the parents, they may bring out the need to have a referral made to another agency, or to emphasize the therapeutic work with the parents, or to have the child's eyes examined, etc.,

etc. The staff must function as an integrated whole so that the work of each member be supported and reinforced by the others.

CHAPTER IV

TREATMENT APPLIED WITHIN THE DAILY SCHOOL PROGRAM

A. Therapeutic Elements Inherent in the Nursery and Kindergarten Programs

The means of helping the maladjusted child which first come to mind are those inherent in the nursery school and kindergarten environment and procedure. All good preschools, with teachers trained in child guidance, with a regular schedule and opportunities for work and play, can exert a stabilizing influence on the maladjusted child. The value of preschool education in guiding the child's personality development and social behavior is universally recognized. Most preschools include among their primary objectives the development of poised, capable, socially and emotionally mature children unhandicapped by fears, attitudes, or behavior patterns which will interfere with subsequent development and satisfactions; and their programs are directed toward this achievement. Thus the Play School program gives children training in the basic habits of eating, sleeping, and elimination, guides them into more socialized conduct, gives them opportunities to express themselves creatively, gives them a feeling of security through their contacts with understanding, even-tempered adults and from a fairly regular program with enough looseness to meet the special needs of

these problem children. As Grace Caldwell says of the Play School, "It gives scope for revealing self expression, requires enough adjustment to measure their growth in self-control, and gives us an opportunity to grade demands to individual needs."[1]

The possibilities for helping the child achieve emotional maturity which are inherent in the School's nursery and kindergarten programs will be briefly suggested. The problem child at Play School has the opportunity of social contact with others of his own age. This means opportunities to learn to participate in the group both as a leader and as a follower. He is helped to distinguish between his property and that of others. He is protected from too difficult situations or situations provocative of emotional upsets, and yet he is given some experience in meeting adversity. The complexity of the situations he is expected to handle are increased as he grows in capacity. Experiences encouraging cooperation, sharing, self-reliance, friendliness, and individual and group responsibility grow out of the preschool program and are guided by alert teachers sensitive to the developing needs and capacities of the group members.

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[1] Grace M. Caldwell, "The Play School for Habit Training," The Twenty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Preschool and Parental Education, (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1929), p.207.

B. Group Training

One of the most important aspects of a nursery school and kindergarten set-up is the group training involved. Children commonly respond to training more rapidly in a group situation than in an individual one and this fact is as important in retraining a problem child as in helping the normal child move ahead. An instance of this is seen in the case of Tony. Part of the Play School's reason for admitting Tony was his mother's complaint that he would not help himself in any way, particularly in dressing. On coming to Play School he saw all the members of his group put on their outdoor wraps with a minimum of help. Naturally he was moved to make an effort and shortly was dressing himself along with the others. And he was very proud of his achievement, too.

The demands made on the problem child when he finds himself in a group environment are recognized, and five essentials helpful in making the social adjustment easier have been found: "Happiness in the new situation; emphasis only on fundamental values or habits; an atmosphere of pleasant matter-of-factness, sympathy, understanding; ample space; and sufficient equipment of the proper kind."[2]

Group training is particularly important for the child whose problem is the result of poor home training or imitation of some person closely associated with him, or due to a dearth

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[2] Ibid., p. 207.

of work and play experiences of a constructive nature. For the child whose problems have a deeper emotional genesis, group training is helpful in suggesting to him better ways of behaving. However, more than this is needed if the School is to get at the base of the problem and treat it so that the child is prepared to meet new situations with equilibrium.

C. Integration of Individual Guidance and Group Training

The Play School, besides employing the advantages of group training in its efforts to substitute socially acceptable behavior for unacceptable behavior, makes particular use of individual guidance within the group situation as a method of fulfilling the special needs of the individual child. With many of these children it is not so much the modification of the problem behavior itself which is important as it is the discovery and removal of causative factors. Therefore, the individual study of the child and the attempt to supply his particular needs through individual treatment plays a large part in the agency's handling of him. It is in this area that the desirability of cooperation between the various staff members is greatest. Unless there has been an exchange of information regarding the child in School and at home, and some conclusions, however tentative, have been made as to what may be some of the lacks in his environment and what particular experiences would help supply his needs and give him security, the help which can be given the child will be

limited.

Individualized treatment is illustrated in the case of Bobby, who talked incessantly of beating people up and running away from home. A home visit by the student social worker revealed that Bobby, as next to the youngest in a family of six children, was pretty much lost in the shuffle. The major form of attention he did receive was domination by his older siblings and his parents, whereas his efforts to "boss" the youngest were blocked because everyone ran to the defense of the baby. This information was discussed in a case conference. The result was that the teacher began a program which would compensate, at least in part, for the lack of recognition and opportunity for self-expression which Bobby felt at home. She gave him more of her personal attention and recognition and provided opportunities for him to assume a leadership role in the group, such as taking part in a dramatization.

In order that the reader may more fully conceive in process the integration of individual guidance and group training as a method of helping a problem child, the case of Kenneth, an unstable, hyperactive, tense, and uncooperative child of superior ability; is included.

KENNETH

Kenneth, the only child in his family, entered Play School two years ago when he was barely two years old. His parents complained he sucked his thumb constantly. They had made every effort to check it without success. He chewed through stocking feet, bandages, plaster. His eating habits

were only fair. He defied his parents in every thing they attempted in the way of training and at every step in his daily routine, and seemed usually to win. Both father and mother seemed intelligent in facing their difficult financial situation and in their efforts to handle this tiny, tense, hyperactive child.

Kenneth was admitted to Play School February 27, 1939, and placed in the youngest group. The staff soon learned his mother had not exaggerated his behavior. When asked to do something he would yell, "Go to hell, go to hell, you lazy bum," and stand defiant. At nap time, according to his Attitudes and Behavior Record, he would push the bed of the child next to him, make noises, and say, "I can seep but I don't want to seep." On the play roof he pretended to fall down, then said laughingly to his teacher, "Come near me. I want to bite you." He would make no move when ordered to take some step in the daily routine such as washing up for lunch or coming down from the play roof and when forced to obey would become openly defiant and strike at the teacher.

By November, 1939 Kenneth had shown little progress in cooperation or in relaxing of tension. Because the Baby Group was over crowded (due to circumstances arising during the Director's enforced absence) and the teacher was finding Kenneth a disrupting handful, and because he showed an Intelligence Quotient of 138, and thus, had the mental age of a three and a half year old child, it was decided to move him up into the Middle Group. Here Kenneth, in due course, "found himself." His new teacher, intrigued by his many lovable qualities and challenged by his excellent mental endowment which, if freed from his negativism, could enable him to make a real contribution to the group both then and in adult life, made Kenneth feel her interest and liking for him. Well poised herself, she could face with composure his desire to defy adult authority. She matter-of-factly required that Kenneth follow directions like the other children, taking care to explain the reasons for her requests. When he balked, she promptly administered punishment, and yet made him feel that she liked him at all times.

When Kenneth's rights as an intelligent individual were thus respected he was more willing to accept adult direction. He gradually learned that cooperation brought appreciation of his acts and that he did not have to be annoying to get attention. His bathroom habits became more regular, his eating habits improved, and he began to sleep during nap time. The teacher was sensitive to his moods and fatigue point and lessened the demands on him as the situation warranted. He gradually became less tense and gained emotional control.

The following excerpt from his Daily Record illustrates the process through which Kenneth gained in stability.

> April 24, 1940. Student teacher told Kenneth to put on his coat and hat to go up on the roof. He became "wild". The regular teacher went to him and said, "Are you tired, Kenneth?" No reply. She helped him with his clothing. While being dressed he held his head against the teacher, and was helpful. No further difficulties then. Was slow about undressing at noon and also about eating. Went to rest promptly and willingly, although lost control and danced about a good deal on the way. Quieted when his teacher came into the room and tucked his blanket around him. Slept a full two hours.

Since the treatment of Kenneth cannot fairly be presented without indicating the work with the parents and cooperation with other agencies, these contacts are included. This type of help will be discussed later in the thesis.

During the treatment of Kenneth in School the Director was having occasional interviews with his parents. She explained the implications of their son's high intelligence and his need to have reasons given for the requests made of him. She advised the discouraged parents about handling Kenneth when he balked at meals or bed time. She talked through with them whether or not the mother should accept a part time job outside the home, explained the influence an upset parent can have on a small child, etc.

The Director and Kenneth's teacher interchanged ideas and experiences concerning Kenneth frequently so that the teacher had the benefit of knowing something of what was happening at home and could profit from the integration of her experiences and thinking with the Director's knowledge and understanding of problem children.

The following summer the Director was able to arrange for Kenneth's enrollment in the nursery department of the Children's Island Sanitarium to help him gain weight (which was way below par), health, and steadiness. He had a happy time there and, though the Children's Island report says he showed considerable restlessness and nervous irritibility, he came back with rosy cheeks and a gain in weight. His counselor there recommended that all excitement be kept from and that his mind should never be particularly stimulated as the ordinary business of life would more than suffice to give him food for thought. At the mother's request the Sanitarium sent her a list of the day's activities there for her to follow with him at home.

This year at Play School Kenneth is one of the happiest children in the kindergarten and his behavior and quality of work and play are satisfactory, though he is the youngest child. He is still not notably stable, occasionally refuses to eat or disturbs the children at rest, but he enters group projects with enthusiasm, makes original contributions in dancing and play, and is definitely trying to be cooperative. Kenneth will probably continue to need special protection from over-stimulation, and the close support of a steadying adult who loves him, but he has been enabled to express himself in socially acceptable ways. He can recognize the need for, and accept, some rules and adult direction; and he starts each day smiling.

This case was chosen, not because it was ideally handled, but because the Play School record was a full one and showed clearly how, in all of the work with Kenneth, there was the typical effort on the part of the Play School staff to apply individual guidance within the group setting. In conclusion, these points can be brought out:

1. Kenneth improved greatly in his second year; because he had a teacher who was calm and poised, who possessed insight into the causes behind his reactions, and who was sensitive to his constantly changing needs and original enough to think of the answers to his needs. The case illustrates the effect the personality of a teacher can have on a child, and shows the need of teachers who can cooperate intelligently with the social worker, psychologist, and other staff members and consultants.

2. Before Kenneth could be intelligently treated at School, it was necessary to get a complete picture of his behavior at home, of his parents, and their attitudes and methods of handling Kenneth, etc.

3. The teacher realized changes in patterns of behavior come slowly, and did not demand more of Kenneth than he could be expected to give. She was particularly careful to lessen her demands when he was excited or tired.

4. Teacher, Director, and parents worked hand in hand.

D. Methods Used to Give Emotional Release

It is very important in work with these problem children that their environment provide a freedom for them to express themselves. If they can express themselves freely they are, thereby, enabled to find release from emotional tensions. By observing these free expressions of emotion the staff can secure a better insight into the child and his problem. Unless, for example, the repressed, shy child can feel free to express his resentments or fears there is little hope of understanding what is troubling him and of offering the right kind of help. The goal is to have the child at ease, relaxed, and accepted at his own level. Only in this atmosphere can he work through his emotional blockings or experiment with forms of social behavior.

The Play School employs several special techniques to help the child find emotional release. One of these is finger painting. Psychiatrically trained people are using finger painting as material for psychiatric therapy, valuable because certain attitudes and aggressions which the child has may be expressed through the paintings, and involving skilled interpretation.[3] Such use of it is considered beyond the province of the Play School staff, however. It does find finger painting valuable as a means of release for the child.

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[3] The Boston Psychopathic Hospital is using finger painting in this way.

His emotional tension is reduced as he gives overt expression to his aggressions and impulses through painting.

Recently the Play School has experimented a little with a family of dolls. The sight of a family constellation stimulates the child to identify the members with his own family. If he feels perfectly free, he may initiate a play in which many of his attitudes and feelings toward his family members and his own role in the family are expressed. This operates as a release for him, and provides the close observer with enlightening information regarding the child.[4] As the doll family is a fairly recent acquisition, most of the Play School's experiments with it lie in the future.

The techniques discussed above are peculiarly adapted to giving the child opportunities for emotional release and have, therefore, been specifically discussed. There are, of course, many other activities which do the same thing to a lesser extent. Coloring, dramatization, imaginative play with blocks or doll house equipment, and clay modeling all provide chances for self-expression.

Dancing is another form of expression used liberally by the Play School. A variety of kinds of good music is played on the victrola. The children sit relaxed in chairs listening. As the spirit moves them they stand up and dance in

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[4] For further discussion of this use of doll play, see Dorothy Baruch, "Doll Play in Pre-School as an Aid in Understanding the Child," Mental Hygiene, 24:566-577, October, 1940.

whatever fashion they desire. The teacher sometimes shows them new steps or body movements to increase their stock of dance ideas, but each child creates his own dance. The teacher interferes only to prevent over-fatigue or over stimulation, or to halt a mob movement which is becoming rowdy. As the year progresses the occasional silliness practically disappears, and the children look forward to the dancing as an opportunity to move rhythmically to music in accordance with their feelings. Naturally some children enjoy music more than others. For a long time music and dancing were the only activities which gave Eleanor enough satisfaction to keep her interested for more than a few moments, but in these she would lose herself. Her performance was tops for the group, esthetically speaking.

If a child feels free enough in his environment he can openly express himself through all that he does. However, complete freedom is considered by the Play School to be more harmful than beneficial since, for living in the real world, the child must be able to control himself and accept restrictions. In fact, the Play School's job in many instances is to teach an uninhibited child self-control. Therefore, the Play School exerts enough guidance and requires sufficient self-control to keep the group a socially constructive body. The value in the specific techniques of finger painting and doll play lies in the fact that they allow free release of emotion without destroying the group morale.

E. A Special Project: Prevention of Reading Failures with their Accompanying Emotional Strain

Included within the school program for the four year period from 1936 to 1940 was a project designed to prevent social and emotional upheavals resulting from slowness in learning to read after entering first grade. Check-ups made on Play School graduates revealed that the grade school achievement of many of them was far below their mental ability. Further study of school records indicated the crux of the matter lay in poor reading ability, which impaired school progress because most of the grade school curriculum is based on language and comprehension of the printed page. Since school failure, with its accompanying aura of disapproval, has a devastating effect on the poise and security of the child, especially the child with a tendency toward emotional unstability, the Play School initiated a pre-reading program designed to reduce the percentage of school failure in future groups to a minimum. The project was incorporated into the School's general treatment program, which continued as usual.

The pre-reading group consisted of those Play School children who were four to five years old. Bernice Factor, the teacher, described the program as follows:

> Preventive work for this group was divided into three classifications. First, there was to be a continuation of the correction of emotional and physical handicaps which would interfere with learning in general.

> Second, correlated with this part of the program would be the detection and correction of defects which would interfere specifically with learning to read, such as, poor vision, deafness, inferior muscular co-ordination, and mixed eye-hand dominance. Third, there would be highly specialized teaching, centering constantly around the problem of language and language expression, as well as around the cultivation of certain skills known to have a high correlation with reading ability, i.e., matching, reproduction of symbols from visual memory, reproduction of symbols from auditory memory, auditory accuracy, and close eye-hand ear-hand co-ordination.[5]

Vocabulary and informational tests showed the greatest handicap in learning to read which the children suffered was a dearth of knowledge and information necessary for comprehension of future reading materials. This was due to the limited experiences of the children, who were handicapped by poverty and parents that were too busy or uninformed to take them on trips or read or talk to them. A list of reading concepts common to all primary reading materials was compiled, each concept having its own descriptive vocabulary, e.g., home and family, community, transportation, safety and health, nature, etc. A program which would expand the children's experiences and give meaning to these concepts became an important part of the pre-reading project. Excursions were made to the airport, the shipyard, the post office. Back in the school room the children re-created their experiences in song, story, play, and art materials.

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[5] Source of this quotation and of the other information about the project: Bernice Factor, "Preventing Reading Failures Before First Grade Entrance," The Elementary English Review, 17:144-149, April, 1940.

They gained familiarity with topics closely related to future reading materials.

This pre-reading project was financed its last two years by the Earhart Foundation in Detroit, a private fund which finances selected educational experiments, usually for a period not longer than two years. In 1940 this support was withdrawn because the project was considered to have proven its worth. Resources have not been available to continue it. The project requires a teacher specially trained in reading techniques and competent to carry on a detailed testing program.

CHAPTER V

WORK WITH PARENTS TO MODIFY THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

The Play School recognizes the tremendous influence which the child's home life has on the development of his personality, and includes the family in the treatment program. Work with the parents begins with the application interview, before the child starts Play School. The use of this first interview as an educational experience as well as an opportunity to gain an understanding of the child and to define the function of the agency has been indicated under the heading of admission procedure. Work with the parents continues as long as the child is in Play School and usually much longer, making Play School a growing experience for the parents as well as the child. Since the value of the seven hours a day which the child spends in the therapeutic environment of the Play School will be greatly magnified and made more lasting if the parents can create a similar healthful environment at home, the Play School places great importance on its parent contacts.

Work with the parents as a method of helping the child by improving his home environment has two aspects, inseparable and overlapping in practice, but distinguishable for explanatory purposes. They are (1) education, and (2) case work. The responsibility for carrying out these functions lies

chiefly with the Director, whose background includes training and experience in both case work and preschool teaching. She is assisted by the student social worker, who receives close supervision. The teachers participate in the parent education process through their conversations with the parents, usually occurring when the parents leave and call for their children.

Work with the parents is accomplished also through personal interviews with the Director or student social worker.[1] Frequently the parents call voluntarily in the office to talk through with the Director some problem which is troubling them. Sometimes the Director asks them to come in if she feels an interview would throw more light on the child's behavior or affect a change in the home which seems indicated. Thus, when Kenneth began to have frequent crying spells, became easily upset, and seemed chronically tired, the Director asked his mother to come and talk with her so that together they might discover what lay behind his behavior and could make any changes at school or at home which would help him.

The student social worker makes home visits but these are not too frequent as the School wants the parents to feel active participants in the reconditioning process and to assume as much responsibility for the guidance of their chil-

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[1] In previous years the Play School has conducted parent education clubs. As these have not proved nearly as valuable as personal interviews and as the staff is overburdened with work, they have not been continued this year.

dren as possible. For these reasons it is considered beneficial to have the parents make the effort to come to the School. However, the advisability of home visits varies in individual cases. There are times when such an active show of interest is just what the parents needs, or the parent is unable to leave the home because of illness or younger children, or he has ignored requests to call at the office. There are times when the School wishes to know the picture of the child in the home through first hand-observation.

A. Parent Education Techniques

The educating of the parents is largely done by talking specifically about their children. It is made a concrete and practical thing. Otherwise, with these uneducated Italian parents, theories of child training would have little meaning. It is better to tell the perplexed mother that at Play School we have found Buddy will not fly in a temper when requested to do something if we warn him several minutes ahead what is coming, than it is to tell her to give the child an opportunity to make the necessary mental and emotional adjustment to each new experience.

The suggestions or explanations made to a parent are adjusted to his or her capacity to receive them. Attention is given first to the most obvious problems in the child, particularly those which the parent sees and of which he has complained. Later the parent is invited to participate in

a united effort to discover basic causes. One mother of a new enrollee complained she could not take the bottle away from her three year old at bedtime without causing loud and long continued crying which kept the baby awake and the whole house in an uproar. The Director suggested she break the child's bottle as if by accident before the child's eyes and then explain there could be no more bottle feeding because the bottle was broken. Later, if the opportunity occurred after the mother felt more secure in the Director and if she asked the reasons for the child's behavior, the Director might think it wise to point out the possibility that the child was jealous of the new baby and wanted babying and physical reassurance herself. This explanation, when possible, should include revealing remarks made by the child at Play School.

Every attempt is made to make this educational process a cooperative project in which the parents take an active and intelligent part. This is desired, not only to secure a maximum of effort from the parents, but also in recognition of the fact that the counselor is not all-wise and is dependent on the parents to present the facts correctly and to assist in judging the value of the counselor's suggestions after they have been applied to the reality situation.

B. Social Case Work

The social work aspects of the Play School are inter-

woven with the educational aspects, being part of the same thing, but, to bring out the value of social work, it will be discussed separately. In working with these parents, more is needed than parent education. There may be other lacks in the home than a knowledge of child training, lacks which the parents cannot change without help. Inadequate income, an ailing mother, poor housing -- these are but a few of the factors with which the Play School concerns itself. Sometimes it can help correct these lacks directly, but more often the parents are told of another agency which will help them. Whenever such referrals are made, the responsibility for making the contact with the other agency is usually left with the parents so that they may become more adequate people and take a greater interest in the project, though a letter of introduction or recommendation is gladly given. The Play School has a small fund available to fill special needs of the families that their own incomes cannot supply, or to assist them in an emergency.

As examples of the service type of work just mentioned which the Play School does, a few of its activities of the past few weeks have been included: a mother was referred to the Vocational Bureau of the North Bennet Street Industrial School, a mother of a family just going on relief was given money to buy a second pair of school overalls for her four year old, a visit was made to a home to see if the parents wished us to register a complaint with the Boston Housing

Authority regarding rats in the building.

Perhaps more important than these efforts to effect material environmental improvements are the efforts to secure a healthier emotional atmosphere for the child at home. This is a particularly important objective for the Play School, since problem children are well known to have "problem parents" behind their waywardness. Clara Tucker, in A Study of Mothers' Practices and Children's Activities in a Co-operative Nursery, has expressed the need of work of this kind very well.

> Merely pointing out to the parent an objectionable attitude is not enough; he needs assistance in establishing practices and techniques which will function constructively in solving problems and forming satisfactory relationships between himself and his child. It is too much to expect that the untrained (and often the trained) parent can express his attitude toward the child in consistently constructive and comprehensible language. However, the understanding of children and their problems, and of relationships as they should exist in the family, is essential for the parent if improvement in family life is to result. Parents of "problem children" need to be skillfully and sympathetically guided in acquiring the techniques with which to meet the problems of family life.[2]

To create in parents the capacity to meet effectively the problems of family life means they must be given help in working through any emotional conflicts of their own, and in facing difficult situations honestly and wisely. To bring a rejecting mother to the point where she can accept her child,

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[2] Clara Tucker, A Study of Mothers' Practices and Children's Activities in a Co-operative Nursery School (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University: New York, 1940.), p.2.

to help an ambivalent mother understand herself and decide whether or not to leave her husband, to create in a frightened mother the fortitude to face a hysterectomy; these achievements require skilled case work operating through a close relationship. And it is necessary that parents receive such assistance if the work with the child is to succeed.

Not all parents need this kind of help. Sometimes the need exists but it is being handled by some other social agency, such as the Family Welfare Society, the other agency and the Play School informing each other of progress. Whatever the situation may be, as soon as the child is enrolled at the Play School his parents have available to them the opportunity to drop in at the office and talk with someone who is friendly, interested, and skilled in understanding and meeting their needs.

CHAPTER VI

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Play School's study of a child and his background may result in the decision that the School cannot adequately meet his needs. Perhaps his emotional problem seems so deep that a referral to a habit clinic or a child guidance clinic seems indicated. The Play School works very closely with the children's psychiatric clinics in Boston, sometimes accepting referrals from them, sometimes making referrals to them. In these instances inter-agency conferences are held to pool information and ideas and make certain that each is working for the same thing.

Cooperation with other agencies than psychiatric clinics is frequent. As would be expected, the School often has occasion to refer parents to medical agencies for advice or treatment for either themselves or their child. This may be in response to a request for advice from a parent, or it may be the result of observations of the child by the staff. Joan's teacher noticed that when looking at picture books Joan held her face only a few inches from the page and even then had difficulty identifying small objects. The Director discussed this with the mother, as a result of which the mother, equipped with a letter of referral from the Play School which included a description of Joan's sight reactions at School, re-

ceived an appointment at the Eye and Ear Infirmary for Joan's eyes to be examined. A week later Joan appeared in School with glasses, equipped to begin the fascinating process of learning to read.

One type of agency of which the Play School makes vital use is summer camps. Summer time in the North End, where the sun beats down on the crowded tenements and on the blistering sidewalks which are the playgrounds of hundreds of children, is a difficult time for all. The Play School continues in operation through the month of July so that the parents' problem of what to do with the children is answered for seven hours a day and the reconditioning process continues. However, the month of August and the first week in September are still unprovided for. During this time the Director sees that as many of her children as possible have some summer camp experience. The parents are encouraged to finance these experiences but when this is an impossibility, and the child's need is great, the Director calls upon the Play School's resources.

Through close association over a period of years the Director has built up a working relationship with a number of preschool camps in which there is an exchange of records, enabling the camp to be prepared for the child and the School to benefit from the camp's experience with him. Children who are physically below par go to such camps as the Children's Island Sanitarium or the Sunlight Hospital. The younger chil-

dren can sometimes be enrolled along with their mothers at the Mothers' Rest Camps in Newton, Massachusetts. Many of the older, healthy children go for twelve days to the North Bennet Street Industrial School Camp in Boxford, Massachusetts. Other camps used are the McGary Summer Camps, Children's Summer School, and Camp Collyer.

Whenever possible several Play School children are sent to camp together to relieve the strangeness. The Play School is questioning somewhat the traumatic effect of separating such young children from their families. Many of the children, when questioned, report that they had a good time, yet they do not want to go again.

CHAPTER VII

FOLLOW-UP WORK

When the child, whose healthy social and emotional growth the Play School has so carefully fostered, goes on to public or parochial school, the Play School does not consider its job done, but rather, just well begun. In the years in which the child has attended Play School, the staff has tried to build in the child a poise and emotional security which will give him resistance to meet the unknown hazards ahead. However, this is a goal which the most skilled application of what is known to date about child training and retraining cannot always assure. In order that the work which it has started will not be wasted the School continues to guide its graduates, protecting them when possible from too damaging experiences and bringing all the constructive elements it can control to bear on the child's life. This follow-up work is considered by the Director as vital an aspect of Play School as the time the child spends in the nursery and kindergarten groups. It comes about as a natural thing since the relationship which the School has built up with parent and child is not one which would be abruptly broken on termination of the child's attendance at Play School.

A. Continuation of Personal Contact with Parents and Child

Parents and graduates feel the School's interest in the child and make friendly visits at the office to report on his progress. If difficulties arise, or for some reason either parent or child feels the need of talking through some situation with a helpful outsider, it is quite natural they should turn to the Play School. Sometimes the Director has been carrying on intensive case work with a parent during the child's attendance at school, and this, of course, continues to its natural termination whether the child is enrolled at Play School or not.

B. Continued Use of Other Agencies

Included in its follow-up activities are arrangements for summer camp experiences for graduates. Referrals are frequently made to other agencies. For example, when nine year old Peggy's mother came to the Director in despair over the child's wild, unmanageable behavior, the Director suggested study at the New England Home for Little Wanderers. At the mother's request she made arrangements for admission, sent ahead a summary of the School's experience with Peggy, and had the student social worker accompany Peggy and her parents to the Home to introduce them to the set-up.

C. Afternoon Clubs for Graduates

A dynamic part of the Play School's follow-up work is the

afternoon clubs for graduates. The School is hampered in this work by a lack of available group leaders. The purpose of these clubs is to keep in touch with the child and his development in order to be ready to counsel child or parent as well as to check on the value of Play School training; and to give the child enriching experiences in fellowship and stimulating activities. A fairly free program is followed, so that the child has an opportunity to pursue his special interests and the leader is enabled to gauge the child's reactions in natural situations.

This year the student social worker has had a club of ten girls of five to seven years of age for an hour and a half one afternoon a week. A typical program will be described. When the girls arrive they play on the roof apparatus for fifteen or twenty minutes to give them a chance to work off energy after sitting much of the day at grade school. When the girls feel ready, they go inside where the group leader has arranged a variety of activities; such as, puzzles, crayons and paper, dolls and play house equipment, or some special craft. After thirty to forty-five minutes of this, the girls play a few organized games and then gather for a cultural period in which the leader reads poems or good children's stories, or plays the victrola. The program is designed to fill the needs of these North End children whose homes are so many of them "underprivileged" in the way of stimulating educational experiences, chances for constructive self-ex-

pression, and cultural benefits. Dramatizations, wood-working, and excursions to museums and to settlement plays are other activities of the group.

An important objective of this afternoon club is to build in the children the ability to control and govern themselves so that the orderliness of the group is not dependent upon the leader's authority and does not disappear in her absence. As the children show increasing capacity to govern themselves, the leader relaxes her control and increases their liberty. Naturally this is a slow process as the experiences of one afternoon a week cannot build up a very great degree of self-control in a group tending to be unstable. This is true especially if in grade school they are used to a teacher-pupil relationship in which the teacher assumes responsibility for an orderly room.

Another phase of the afternoon club which should be mentioned is the opportunity for integration of group and case work. The leader pays close attention to the personalities of the individual children and tries to create situations which will fill the special needs of each. Thus, the self-effacing Phyllis, with good art ability, is encouraged in this line and the attention of the group is brought to her good work. Ruth cannot be happy unless she is with her intimate friend Louisa. The leader helps Ruth to make enjoyable contacts with other children. She constantly tries to use the group as a therapeutic aid in meeting the needs of the individual child. In

this she is greatly assisted by the Play School's knowledge of the child in the past, made known to the leader through conversation with the Director and by reading the children's records.

D. Case Illustrating the Value of Follow-Up Work

This is a record of a family contact which the Play School has continued for thirteen years. The record has been adapted, with minor modifications, from an account written by the Director, Grace Caldwell, to illustrate the value of follow-up work.

In 1927 the State Habit Clinic referred to the Play School a little four year old girl, called Angelina. At home she was almost beyond the mother's control. She was defiant, stubborn, resentful, and in the habit of stealing from stores near her home.

The Play School found a family background presenting almost insurmountable odds. The father was illiterate, immoral, cruel, and abusive. Although at that time he was earning a good wage he refused to use it for proper food or clothing for the family, and the children were pitifully shabby and undernourished. The mother was pale, frightened and cowed; and did not dare to take steps to protect herself and the children. She often bore marks of the father's brutality.

The home was in one of the worst tenement houses in the North End. Besides Angelina there were, at the time of referral, three younger children.

The Play School accepted Angelina and while working on her personality problems in the school environment, began an attack on the home situation. The mother and four children were living in an atmosphere of constant fear and apprehension due to the father's abuse. The Play School asked the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to cooperate, and with its help at least part of the brutal abuse was stopped. Later, with encouragement, the mother found courage to go to the courts for further help.

The Play School decided to use this family situation as

a demonstration of the effectiveness of its methods when faced with one of the most difficult home situations it was likely to meet. Therefore, in succeeding years five children from this home were accepted for training, each presenting behavior difficulties which included temper tantrums, negativism, stealing, and refusal to accept reasonable discipline; all seemingly due to the instability of the home atmosphere.

The Play School Director gave the mother encouragement and support, and advised her about wiser methods of handling the children. As she became less apprehensive, she revealed an amazing degree of initiative, resourcefulness, and intelligence. Against the hardest odds of any mother the School had worked with, she made the greatest effort to do everything the School asked of her.

As each child went on to public school, the Play School continued its supervision through afternoon clubs and home contacts, because the problems of the children were so deeply rooted they could not be corrected in the two years at Play School. The mother tried at home to carry out the school's methods, and came regularly to talk over her problems with the Director. The children visited to tell about their school records and other activities. The family was encouraged to move to better quarters in the West End.

Angelina continued to be a behavior problem, at home, in school, and at camp. The Play School tried to meet each crisis with the right help and a gradual increase in stability and regard for others could be discerned. She grew to be a real help to her mother in managing the house and in initiating interesting projects for the younger children. In early adolescence she became associated with a group of shop-lifters. The Play School referred her to the Judge Baker Guidance Center and the Children's Aid Association. With their help she ceased her delinquencies and found satisfaction in normal social activities.

A younger sister with a bad case of rickets -- so bad that her legs were almost crippled -- was sponsored by the Play School for several summers at the Children's Island Sanatarium, and now has legs as straight as those of a normal child. She has a high intelligence and last summer was sent by the School to Mr. Shaw's camp for superior children at Topsfield. She came home with a splendid record.

The present situation is the result of thirteen years intensive work, and it is one which can be viewed with satisfaction. The father's abuse has stopped. After a long interval of unemployment he has found a job and uses the money for

the family. The Play School has been able to make some pleasant contacts with him this last year, a feat which seemed impossible a few years ago. The house is carefully furnished, often from sales at the Salvation Army, but arranged with taste. There are now eight children. All seem reasonably well adjusted and are doing satisfactory school work. They have made their own contacts with the social agencies and clubs of their district, and are no longer problems in behavior.

The Play School has employed time, money, and every bit of intelligent guidance it could muster in working with the family. It had the most cordial cooperation of other social agencies. The value of long continued contact with the family of a problem child has been established. In this home there now exists a nearly normal family relationship, and as happy, frank, and wholesomely active a group of children as one could wish.

PART THREE

CONCLUSION

A. The Place of the Play School in the Child Welfare Movement

In the twentieth century the child welfare movement in America has been gaining increasing importance because of the recognition of the influence of early childhood on later life, and therefore, on the character of the future citizenry. As Phillips Brooks so far-sightedly expressed it, "The future of the race marches forward on the feet of little children." Important concepts guiding the direction of the child welfare movement include the discovery that the child is not a miniature adult, but a growing individual requiring treatment differing not only in degree but in kind from that received by an adult; the recognition of individual differences and consequent necessity for individual treatment; and the discovery of certain fundamentals to happy growth and personality development. The minimum requirements of general living conditions, health services, spiritual and emotional satisfactions, secure family life, recreational facilities, and preparation for earning a living and making a home have been eloquently expressed in The Children's Charter formulated at the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930.[1]

To fill these generally accepted needs, various agencies, institutions, and drives have been growing and improving their techniques. These include public health projects, children's

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[1] "The Children's Charter," White House Conference 1930 (New York: The Century Company, 1931), p. 45.

protective agencies and child placing agencies, visiting teachers, day nurseries, settlement houses, habit and guidance clinics, summer camps, special classes, progressive education programs, schools for handicapped children, supervised recreation on playgrounds, etc., etc. The Play School for Habit Training is a children's agency which has been developed to fill a particular need in the child welfare movement, namely, the early treatment of maladjusted children.

There is a growing realization of the desirability of integrating the services listed above in order that the work of each may be strengthened, and to assure a common plan which recognizes the needs of the total individual. The Play School promotes this factor of integration; first, in its comprehensive intra-agency program, which includes attention to the child's physical condition, habit training, treatment of personality maladjustments, preschool education, work with the families, and afternoon clubs; and secondly, in its close association with many other agencies.

We have seen how the Play School, taking as its province the rehabilitation of the problem child, has called upon the fields of child training and development, of child psychology and mental hygiene, of case work, group work, and progressive education for its theories and techniques. Without these other developments the Play School could not have been created. It was born out of these components of child welfare work, and shares their common goal; that of creating healthy, happy,

socially constructive potential citizens. It can be described as an agency which integrates case work, group work, and progressive education at the preschool level with special application to problem children. The significance of the place of the Play School for Habit Training in the child welfare movement lies in the possibilities which it offers for achieving with individual children, already on the wrong track, the common goal stated above.

Though the Play School borrowed freely from the various fields of child welfare the theories and methods which it integrates, it is an honest debtor, for it has given much in return. It is a valuable supplement to psychiatric clinics, for it offers a controlled environment seven hours a day, five days a week, for children whose needs the clinic has determined but which cannot be adequately met in the home. The Play School is in constant process of discovering techniques of child training and retraining which would be of equal value applied to ordinary schools with normal children. It has proven the practicability of integrating education with social adjustment. Public and private schools, if interested in the development of informed citizens sufficiently well integrated to follow judicious thinking with effective action, and not in mere academic achievement, should include in their programs provision for guiding the social and emotional adjustment of their charges.

Because the Play School has grown up in an area charac-

terized by economic necessity, illiteracy, and a foreign culture does not signify its value is limited to such areas. The children from so-called privileged homes have problems, too. With adaptations, a similar school should prove of equal value in meeting the needs of children and parents in the higher income levels. The intrinsic validity of the Play School which makes it applicable to problem children everywhere increases the importance of its place in the child welfare movement.

B. A Re-interpretation of What the Play School Tries to Do

The Play School for Habit Training tries to build in children who are not adjusting satisfactorily to this demanding world the emotional security, attitudes, and behavior patterns necessary for dynamic socialized living. It helps them bring under control inborn and acquired characteristics and attitudes which are harmful to their own welfare and the welfare of others. It attempts to accomplish this by exerting a constructive influence in all possible phases of the child's life, and is especially active in those areas in which the child's personality development is handicapped or frustrated by home or environmental factors.

Specialists in children's work generally concede there are fundamental physical, intellectual, and emotional needs which should, in the main, be filled if the child is to achieve a satisfactory life adjustment. The Play School recognizes these needs, and builds its program around them. It seeks to

provide the setting for physical well-being through a nutritious diet, balanced schedule of activity and rest, outdoor play, and attention to special health needs. There is an attempt to reconstruct such a healthful environment in the home through parent education, cooperation with community resources, and social action. This attention to physical needs is particularly important in the congested North End of Boston, where housing standards are low, where disease and mortality rates are comparatively high, and there is an ignorance of dietary and other physical hygiene needs.

Besides working to assure the child's physical well-being, the Play School seeks to supply intellectual and emotional needs. The School provides experiences which gradually broaden the child's sphere of adequacy and increase his independence, it encourages constructive social contacts with other children and with adults, it offers motivation for worthwhile achievements and recognition of effort, it provides opportunities for aesthetic, social and spiritual satisfactions. Through its study of the child in the School and at home, the staff determines the particular frustrations or traumatic experiences which may be causing the individual child's maladjustment. It effects a treatment plan directed toward filling the special needs, whether they be for praise, affection, more self-direction, intellectual stimulation, reassurance, opportunities for leadership, acquaintance with regularity and adult control. This treatment plan is not limited to the work

of the staff within the School. Work with the parents and with community factors is directed toward eliminating all possible harmful influences and substituting constructive forces in the child's life.

In working with the child particular emphasis is placed on creating helpful attitudes in the child toward his siblings and parents. As an example of how this can work out, Benny's mother reports that her three youngest children are constantly quarreling and often defiant of her orders, but that Benny, the Play School pupil, alone of the three can be reasoned with and has a sense of justice regarding sharing and punishment. This transfer of attitudes is an interacting process in that the children transfer the attitudes of their home life to the teachers and Play School children, as well as the other way around. The School staff exerts skill in dealing with the child so to minimize the discrepancy between attitudes and behavior required at home and at School, in order to protect the child from conflict.

To effect lasting results the School must build in the child an inner resistance to future hazards which it cannot even anticipate. If the strains ahead could be foreseen, or if the child's environment could be controlled after he leaves the School, its job would be much simpler. The Play School tries to create in the child helpful attitudes toward people and life, useful personal and social habits, and competence in accepted lines of achievement so that he will not only be well

adjusted in his present situation, but adjustable to the situations he will meet in the future.

C. Some Achievements of the Play School for Habit Training

A scientific evaluation of the work of the Play School does not fall within the scope of this thesis. There is a need for a further study covering such an area. However, there are a few available facts which throw some light on the past success of the Play School. Nineteen years have passed since the Play School was started so it should be possible to estimate its success with the earlier graduates. The Director states that most of these appear to be functioning adequately in their normal environment. Some of them have already married and are competently managing homes and children. Many more are supporting themselves at regular employment. On the whole they are good citizens, productive socially and economically. Only three graduates have appeared in juvenile courts. Eight have needed follow-up work at a psychiatric clinic of some sort. However, the Director is insistent in pointing out that it is impossible to measure separately, in any individual case, what the Play School has done, what growth has done, and what a change in home conditions has done.

D. Future Possibilities of the School

The Play School for Habit Training should be appreciated not only for what it has been, but also for the opportunities which its set-up offers for future development, including ex-

perimentation and research. The field of play techniques is just being investigated by the Play School. Finger painting as a method of self-expression has been used there for some time. The School owns a family of dolls and the use of doll play as a means of release for the problem child and as a method of gaining insight into his emotional conflicts is a substantial possibility for the future. The use of puppets is a technique that could be tried.

The application of relationship therapy to children, a new field in which Helen Durkin has done some experimentation and obtained very creditable results, offers possibilities for the Play School.[2] As she practiced it with a play group, the children were allowed almost complete freedom of activity and expression so that they could work through their aggressions and fears. Because the Play School is as interested in training in acceptable social behavior as in psychotherapy, it would probably be impractical to create such a freedom of activity and expression as is involved in relationship therapy of this kind. However, for a selected group of children seeming to have a need for working through emotional conflicts on such a realistic basis, it might prove very valuable. In summarizing her experiment with relationship therapy, Mrs. Durkin says of it, "We can at least conclude that we can help

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[2] Helen E. Durkin, "Dr. John Levy's Relationship Therapy as Applied to a Play Group," The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 9:583-597, July, 1939.

children appreciably by applying relationship therapy in a group." Later she adds, "Here we have the basis of a new and far more effective nursery school technique."[3]

It is possible that in the future the Play School will wish to have a still closer association with habit and guidance clinics than it has now, perhaps to the point of opening a definite consultation service with one of them so that competent advice could be sought on the diagnosis and treatment of children seeming to have deep psychiatric problems. Under such an arrangement the Play School could organize the wealth of its records of observations and parental contacts pertaining to a problem child and present them to the psychiatrist for study and mutual discussion. The recommendations which evolved would be applied by the Play School and presented by the Play School Director to the parents. If direct contact with the child by the psychiatrist seemed necessary, it could be accomplished at the Play School, thus preventing the child from having to become orientated to a new set-up. The Play School would continue to carry major responsibility for treatment and for work with the parents.

The value of case work methods in working with the families of maladjusted children has proven its worth over the years. The closer the ties which the School has with the home, and the more judicious its relationship, the greater

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[3] Ibid., p. 597.

the improvement in the child. To conduct a thorough case work program which would provide for regular contacts with all of the parents of children enrolled in the School, plus contacts with parents of graduates when indicated; for close observation and acquaintance with the children in the schoolrooms so that the home and School factors could be integrated; and for systematic recording; would require the part-time services of a case worker to share the load with the Director. Future developments may include such an arrangement, possibly through sharing a case worker with another preschool, or with a children's or family agency, or with an associated clinic, or with the Industrial School.

No statistical or analytical records have been kept of the methods of handling children tried by the School. Future research into this area to evaluate the results of the various methods might result in valuable contributions to the field of child training, as well as indicate to the Play School its strengths and weaknesses.

Developments along the lines which have been suggested would involve some adaptations within the Play School, such as additional staff members. However, the School is flexible enough to make those adaptations, and its administration such that it is a rich ground for such experimentation and research.

APPENDIX

A. Mimeographed Observation Guides Used by the Play School for Habit Training

Suggestions handed to student teachers and others making observations of the children are found on pages 82 and 83. The blanks on which the observations are recorded are found on pages 84, 85, 86, 87, and 88.

METHODS AND DATA TO BE USED IN WRITING REPORTS

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

OBSERVE AND RECORD

Special Habit Needing Correction
Any appearance of Related Habits
Individual Reactions to Situations Developing within the group.
e.g. Leaders and followers, etc.
Reactions to Situations Purposely Developed by the teacher.
Fairly Habitual Responses and Attitudes
Occasional of Seemingly Erratic Responses or Attitudes
Tracing immediate cause when possible.

WORK AND PLAY ACTIVITIES

OBSERVE AND RECORD

Purposeful or Constructive Activity
Imaginative Work or Play
Cooperative or Uncooperative Work or Play with others.
Progression in Work and Play -- advancing from idea to other related ideas.
New ideas or the Expression of Ideas in Activity
Actual time of each Activity, Voluntary or Suggested at least one day of each week.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ABILITIES AND HABITS

OBSERVE AND RECORD

Use of language
Clear articulation
Varied Vocabulary
Music and Rhythm
Use of Handkerchief
Toilet Habits
Eating -- meat, controlled or Greedy
Muscular control
Attention
Ability to carry out a request or an errand

SUMMARY FOR WEEK

OBSERVE AND RECORD

Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory attitudes and behavior
" " " activities
" " " physical abilities or habits
" " " mental abilities & habits

Improvement in
No improvement in
If no improvement (Note methods used -- make suggestions.)

[illegible] AND [illegible] TO USE IN [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] AND [illegible]

[illegible] AND [illegible]

[illegible] Basic Section Instructions
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NOTES

EACH DAY SHOULD PRESENT SOME PROBLEM IN:

1. Mental control or ability
2. Emotional control
3. Physical control
4. Language and expression
5. Social response

These problems should increase in difficulty as the child's ability to attain each standard is shown. For example:- each day should present as many hazards as a golf course and as interesting to master.

Play is the natural expression of a child's abilities and interests. It requires the right sort of material and some direction for its normal developments.

It may become non-productive, if so, what is the cause
If there is a consistent loss of interest in the use of certain material; try to estimate:

1. Whether the material itself is at fault
   a. In its constructive or creative possibilities
   b. In its possibilities in relation to the age of the child.
2. Whether its possibilities are not realized by the child and he needs suggestions.

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2. [illegible] [illegible]
3. [illegible] [illegible]
4. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
5. [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

CHILDS NAME .....

DATE .....

PHYSICAL AGE .....

MENTAL AGE.....

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY.....

PUPIL'S CHRONOLOGICAL BIRTH IN FAMILY.....

PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITION.....

HOME SITUATION .....

REMARKS .....

.....

.....

.....

CHILD'S NAME.....

DATE.....

WORK AND PLAY ACTIVITIES

CHILD'S NAME. . . . . .

DATE. . . . . .

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ABILITIES AND HABITS

CHILD'S NAME.....RECORDER.....

DATE.....SCHOOL.....

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

CHILD'S NAME . . . . . .

SUMMARY OF WEEK OF.....

SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY . (Good, Fair, Poor)

ATTITUDES . . . . . .

ACTIVITIES . . . . . .

PHYSICAL ABILITIES AND HABITS . . . . . .

MENTAL ABILITIES AND HABITS . . . . . .

IMPROVEMENT IN:

NO IMPROVEMENT IN:

IF NO IMPROVEMENT (Note method used - make suggestions)

B. Mimeographed Opportunity Record

The Opportunity Record which follows is a sample of those filled in by teachers, social worker, and others who are observing the progress of the children.

USE OF OPPORTUNITY RECORD

This sheet is designed to

1. Show the child's special interests - initiative - social adjustments in relation to the opportunities which his environment presents.

2. Measure growth or retardation in their use.

Child's name | Name of Recorders | Date
Birth date

Activities	Voluntary	Suggested	Imitative	Imaginative	Creative

General Social Attitudes

Comments

C. Mimeographed Blanks for Use in Determining and Meeting Health Needs

The three blanks which follow are for use in determining and meeting the children's health needs. The Height and Weight Records are filled in by the teachers, who weigh and measure the children monthly. The Posture Records are kept by students from the Bouvre-Boston School of Physical Education who come to the Play School weekly to give corrective posture and foot exercises to the children who need them. The Sleep Records are kept by the regular teachers.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT RECORDS -- ACTUAL AND STANDARD

NAME_____

YEAR_____

MONTH	AGE IN MOS.	H.	S.H.	W.	S.W.	NOTES

POSTURE RECORD

Date Child's Name Birth date Age

Posture Defects

Corrective exercises

Date	Physical Improvement	Attitude Factors

SLEEP RECORD _____

All in bed at	Children whose attitude and position favorable to sleep	Restless	Asleep	Time	Awake	length of nap

INTERRUPTIONS

REMARKS

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